

# Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Salvation, Session 19, Preservation and Perseverance III, Assurance, Systematic Formulation Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Peterson, Salvation, Session 19, Preservation and Perseverance III, Assurance, Systematic Formulation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture on Salvation, Session 19, explores the complementary doctrines of preservation and perseverance, emphasizing that while God keeps believers saved, they must also persevere in faith and holiness. The session clarifies that salvation is by grace through faith, not works, but true faith inevitably results in good works, supported by scriptural passages from Ephesians, Titus, Hebrews, and 1 John. **Peterson highlights that believers are recreated in Christ for good works prepared by God.** The lecture further examines assurance, the confidence in final salvation, identifying three primary means by which God assures his people: the promises in his Word, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual growth evident in their lives. **Through various scriptural examples, Peterson illustrates how these three aspects work together to strengthen a believer's certainty of their salvation.**

**2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Peterson, Salvation, Session 19 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Salvation).**



**Peterson\_Salvation\_  
Session19.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Salvation, Session 19, Preservation and Perseverance III, Assurance, Systematic Formulation**

#### **Briefing Document: Preservation, Perseverance, and Assurance in Salvation**

##### **Overview:**

This document summarizes the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. Robert Peterson in Session 19 of his teaching on Salvation, focusing on the interconnected doctrines of Preservation (how God keeps his people saved), Perseverance (the necessity of believers continuing in faith, love, and holiness), and Assurance (the confidence in final salvation). Peterson emphasizes the coherence of these doctrines while exploring their individual facets and mutual implications.

##### **Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:**

##### **1. The Complementary Truths of Preservation and Perseverance:**

- The Bible teaches both that God preserves his people and that believers must persevere in faith, love, and holiness.
- These truths are complementary, though their immediate coherence may not be self-evident.
- "We have studied Preservation, how God keeps his people saved... We're studying Perseverance, and it must be a complementary truth since the Bible is teaching is coherent, although it's not self-evident how they cohere immediately." (p. 1)

##### **2. Perseverance in Holiness:**

- While salvation is by faith alone and not by works, true saving faith inevitably produces good works.
- Believers must continue to pursue holiness and persevere in it for final salvation.
- "But the Bible also teaches God's people must persevere in faith, love, and now holiness. Believers must continue to pursue holiness. Christians must persevere in holiness if they are to be finally saved." (p. 1)
- Peterson examines four key biblical passages to illustrate this truth:

- **Ephesians 2:8-10:** Salvation is by grace through faith (not works), but believers are God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for us to walk in them." (p. 1) True salvation results in good works, as believers are part of God's new creation.
- **Titus 3:4-7:** Salvation is due to God's kindness, love, mercy, and grace, not by works of righteousness. However, this free justification should lead believers to "devote themselves to good works." (p. 3, quoting Titus 3:8) These works benefit both the believer and the world.
- **Hebrews 12:14:** Believers are commanded to "pursue peace with everyone and pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (p. 3) This holiness is not optional but essential to the Christian life. F.F. Bruce notes, "the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord is... no optional extra in the Christian life, but something that belongs to its essence." (p. 3)
- **1 John:** This epistle strongly emphasizes the necessity of believers living out their faith by saying no to sin and yes to holiness. Passages like 1 John 1:5-6 ("If we say we have fellowship with him and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth.") and 1 John 2:3-5 ("This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments.") highlight this. However, Peterson clarifies that this doesn't mean sinless perfection (referencing 1 John 1:8-2:1 which acknowledges the reality of sin and the provision for forgiveness through Christ).

### 3. Assurance of Salvation:

- Assurance is the confidence in final salvation.
- God graciously assures his people through three primary means:
- **The Promises of Salvation in His Word:** This is the most fundamental source of assurance. Examples include John 3:16, John 10:28 ("I give my sheep eternal life, and they will never perish."), Romans 8:1 ("therefore does not condemn those for those in Christ Jesus."), and Romans 8:38-39. 1 John 5:11-12 distinguishes between those who "have the Son" and those who do not, grounding assurance in faith in Christ.
- **The Internal Witness of the Holy Spirit:** The Spirit works within believers to grant confidence in their final salvation. Key passages include Romans 5:5 ("God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.") and Romans 8:16 ("The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are

God's children." ). This witness is deeply felt and experienced, complementing rational understanding.

- **Spiritual Growth in the Lives of His People:** Evidence of genuine faith and progress in godliness (goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, love - 2 Peter 1:5-7) strengthens assurance. Conversely, a lack of these qualities can indicate a lack of salvation (2 Peter 1:9). 1 John 2:3-6 links knowing God with keeping his commands. "Positively by keeping God's commands, Christians gain assurance of knowing him." (p. 11)

#### 4. Interplay of the Means of Assurance:

- These three means of assurance are not mutually exclusive but work together.
- Peterson highlights Romans 5:1-5 (and verse 10) as a key passage that combines all three:
- **Word:** Confidence in justification and reconciliation through Christ's death (Romans 5:1, 10).
- **Spirit:** The Holy Spirit pouring out God's love in our hearts (Romans 5:5).
- **Spiritual Growth:** Boasting in afflictions leading to endurance, proven character, and hope (Romans 5:3-4), demonstrating God's work in changing believers' lives.

#### 5. Importance of God's Activity in Spiritual Growth:

- While believers are active in pursuing godliness, their spiritual growth is ultimately enabled by God's grace through faith.
- Philippians 2:12-13 highlights this: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (p. 11)
- Jesus' words in John 15:5 ("Apart from me you can do nothing.") emphasize dependence on Christ.

#### 6. Holiness is Not Self-Help:

- The Christian life and the pursuit of holiness are not merely self-improvement programs.
- God works in and through his children in every aspect of their journey, including spiritual growth.

## 7. Looking Ahead to Apostasy:

- The next lecture will address the challenging biblical teaching of apostasy, implying its connection to the themes of perseverance and assurance.

### Quotes:

- "Salvation is by faith, not by pursuing holiness. But true saving faith works, it produces good works." (p. 1)
- "for you're saved by grace through faith, and this salvation is not from yourselves. It's God's gift, not from works, so that no one should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, quoted on p. 1)
- "pursue peace with everyone and pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (Hebrews 12:14, quoted on p. 3)
- "God is light, and there is absolutely no darkness in him. If we say we have fellowship with him and yet we walk in darkness, we are lying and are not practicing the truth." (1 John 1:5-6, quoted on p. 4)
- "This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments." (1 John 2:3, quoted on p. 4)
- "I give my sheep eternal life, and they will never perish." (John 10:28, quoted on p. 7)
- "The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children." (Romans 8:16, quoted on p. 8)
- "make every effort to confirm your calling and election, because if you do these things, you will never stumble." (2 Peter 1:10, quoted on p. 10)
- "This is how we know that we know him if we keep his commands." (1 John 2:3, quoted on p. 10)
- "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:12-13, quoted on p. 11)
- "you can do nothing apart from me." (John 15:5, quoted on p. 11)

- "Paul insists that what God has done for us in Christ is the sole and final grounds for our eternal life. At the same time as he insists on the indispensability of holy living as the precondition for attaining that life." (Moo Commentary in Romans 495, quoted on p. 11)

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Peterson provides a detailed exposition of the doctrines of preservation, perseverance, and assurance, highlighting their interconnectedness. He emphasizes that while salvation is solely by God's grace through faith, genuine faith will manifest in a life of persevering holiness. God, in his grace, provides assurance of this final salvation through the promises of his Word, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and the evidence of spiritual growth in the lives of believers. This session lays the groundwork for the subsequent discussion on the complex topic of apostasy.

## 4. Study Guide: Peterson, Salvation, Session 19, Preservation and Perseverance III, Assurance, Systematic Formulation

### Study Guide: Preservation, Perseverance, and Assurance

#### Key Concepts

- **Preservation:** God's act of keeping his people saved. This involves the work of the Trinity, God's attributes, and the various facets of Christ's work.
- **Perseverance:** The necessity for God's people to continue in faith, love, and holiness to be finally saved. This is not salvation by works but the fruit of true saving faith.
- **Holiness:** The ongoing pursuit of moral purity and conformity to God's character. While not sinless perfection, it is a necessary characteristic of believers.
- **Justification:** Being declared righteous by God through faith apart from works of the law. This is a gift of God's grace.
- **Regeneration:** The work of the Holy Spirit in giving new spiritual life to believers, a new creation in Christ.
- **Assurance:** The believer's confidence in their final salvation. God provides this through his Word, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual growth.
- **Apostasy:** The abandonment or renunciation of one's religious faith. (This will be discussed in the next lecture but is mentioned as being related to assurance).
- **Beatific Vision:** The final, joyful seeing of God experienced by believers in the afterlife.
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing or satisfying God's wrath through sacrifice (referring to Christ's atoning work).

#### Quiz

1. Explain the relationship between salvation by faith and the necessity of pursuing holiness according to the text.
2. Describe how Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-7 clarify the role of works in salvation.
3. According to Hebrews 12:14, what is essential for believers to experience the "beatific vision"? What does this imply about the Christian life?

4. How does 1 John address the issue of sin in the life of a believer? What balance does it provide regarding the pursuit of holiness?
5. What are the three primary means by which God graciously assures his people of their final salvation? Briefly describe each.
6. Explain how specific passages in John and Romans support the idea of assurance through God's Word. Provide one example from each book.
7. Describe the role of the Holy Spirit in providing assurance to believers, referencing specific passages from 1 John and Romans.
8. How does the parable of the sower (Luke 8:11-15) illustrate the connection between receiving the Word and producing lasting spiritual fruit, and how does this relate to assurance?
9. According to 2 Peter 1:5-11, how does spiritual growth contribute to a believer's assurance of their calling and election?
10. How does Romans 5:1-5 and 10 combine the three means of assurance discussed in the text? Briefly outline the elements mentioned.

### **Answer Key**

1. Salvation is received by grace through faith alone, not by pursuing holiness. However, true saving faith is a working faith that inevitably produces good works and a desire for holiness. The pursuit of holiness is not the means of salvation but evidence of genuine salvation.
2. Ephesians 2:8-9 states clearly that salvation is a gift of God received through faith, not based on works to prevent boasting. However, verse 10 explains that believers are God's workmanship, created for good works that God prepared for them to do, highlighting that good works are the result, not the cause, of salvation. Similarly, Titus 3:4-7 emphasizes that salvation comes from God's kindness, love, mercy, and grace, not from righteous deeds we have done, but the result is regeneration and a godly life.
3. Hebrews 12:14 states to "pursue peace with everyone and pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord." This implies that the pursuit of holiness is not an optional extra but an essential aspect of the Christian life for experiencing the final vision of God.



4. 1 John emphasizes the necessity of believers living out their faith by saying no to sin and yes to holiness. However, it also balances this by acknowledging in 1 John 1:8-9 that if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Confession of sin and reliance on God's forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice are presented as normal parts of the Christian life.
5. The three primary means are: (1) **The promises of salvation in God's Word**, which provide a reliable foundation for confidence. (2) **The internal witness of the Holy Spirit**, who assures believers of God's love and their adoption as children. (3) **Spiritual growth in the lives of God's people**, as evidenced by the fruit of the Spirit and progress in godliness.
6. John 3:16 promises eternal life to whoever believes in Jesus, offering assurance through the gospel message itself. Romans 8:38-39 expresses Paul's persuasion that nothing can separate believers from God's love in Christ Jesus, assuring them of God's unwavering commitment to their salvation.
7. The Holy Spirit provides assurance by working within believers. 1 John 4:13 states that we know we remain in God and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit. Romans 8:16 teaches that "the Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children," providing an inner conviction of our relationship with God.
8. The parable illustrates that only the seed sown on good ground, representing those who hear the word with an honest and good heart, hold onto it, and endure to produce fruit, signifies true believers. This lasting fruitfulness and endurance can provide assurance of genuine faith and salvation.
9. 2 Peter 1:5-11 encourages believers to actively supplement their faith with godly qualities. Peter states that those who grow in these qualities will be useful and fruitful and will confirm their calling and election, assuring them that they will never stumble and will have a rich welcome into God's eternal kingdom.
10. Romans 5:1-5 provides assurance through the Word by declaring believers justified by faith and reconciled to God (verses 1 and 10). It highlights assurance through the Holy Spirit by stating that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us (verse 5). Assurance through changed lives is indicated in verses 3-4, where Paul explains that afflictions produce endurance, character, and hope, demonstrating God's work in believers' lives.

## Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the complementary nature of preservation and perseverance in Christian theology as presented in the source material. How do these two truths work together in the life of a believer?
2. Analyze the significance of pursuing holiness in the Christian life according to the provided texts. While salvation is by grace through faith, why is perseverance in holiness considered necessary for final salvation?
3. Evaluate the three primary means by which God assures believers of their final salvation, drawing specific examples and scriptural references from the text. Which of these means is presented as the foundational source of assurance, and why?
4. Explore the relationship between assurance and spiritual growth as described in the source material. How does a believer's active pursuit of godliness impact their confidence in their salvation?
5. Considering the passages from 1 John, discuss how believers should navigate the reality of sin in their lives while still striving for holiness and maintaining assurance of salvation. What key practices are emphasized in this context?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Preservation:** God's sovereign activity in maintaining the salvation of those who are genuinely saved, ensuring they do not ultimately fall away.
- **Perseverance:** The continuous and persistent obedience and faith demonstrated by true believers as a result of God's preserving grace. It is the evidence of genuine salvation.
- **Assurance:** The confident persuasion that one is a genuine believer and will ultimately inherit eternal life with God.
- **Justification:** The act by which God declares a sinner righteous in his sight based solely on the merits of Jesus Christ, received through faith.
- **Regeneration:** The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which a spiritually dead person is given new life and a new nature, enabling them to believe and follow God.
- **Sanctification:** The ongoing process by which believers are made more holy and conformed to the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit and their cooperation.
- **Holiness:** Moral purity and separation from sin, reflecting God's own character. For believers, it is both a present reality (positional holiness in Christ) and a lifelong pursuit (progressive holiness).
- **Atonement:** Christ's work on the cross by which he paid the penalty for sin, satisfying God's justice and reconciling humanity to God.
- **Grace:** God's unmerited favor and love freely given to humanity, particularly in the context of salvation.
- **Faith:** Trust in and reliance upon God and specifically upon Jesus Christ for salvation. In the context of perseverance, it is an ongoing trust.

## **5. FAQs on Peterson, Salvation, Session 19, Preservation and Perseverance III, Assurance, Systematic Formulation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions on Salvation, Preservation, Perseverance, and Assurance**

#### **1. How do the concepts of preservation and perseverance relate to each other in the doctrine of salvation?**

Preservation refers to God's work in keeping his people saved. The Bible teaches that the Trinity, God's attributes, and the work of Christ all contribute to this preservation.

Perseverance, on the other hand, describes the necessity for God's people to continue in faith, love, and holiness. While it may not be immediately obvious how these two truths cohere, the Bible presents them as complementary. God preserves believers, and as a result, true believers will persevere in holy living.

#### **2. Does salvation depend on good works?**

Salvation is attained by grace through faith, not by works of righteousness. Passages like Ephesians 2:8-9 and Romans 3:27-28 clearly state that salvation is God's gift and not the result of human effort, so that no one can boast. However, true saving faith is not inactive; it inevitably produces good works. Ephesians 2:10 states that believers are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand for them to do. Therefore, while works do not earn salvation, they are a natural and necessary outcome of genuine salvation.

#### **3. Why is perseverance in holiness considered essential for believers?**

While salvation is by faith, the Bible teaches that believers must persevere in holiness to be finally saved. Passages like Hebrews 12:14, which urges believers to "pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord," emphasize the importance of ongoing sanctification. This holiness is not sinless perfection but a continuous striving to live according to God's will. The practical holiness of life is integral to the Christian experience and is not an optional extra.

#### **4. How does the first Epistle of John address the issue of sin and holiness in the life of a believer?**

1 John emphasizes that believers should live out their professed faith by saying no to sin and yes to holiness. While some passages in 1 John might seem to suggest that Christians never sin, the epistle also acknowledges the reality of sin in the believer's life (1 John 1:8-10; 2:1-2). It highlights the importance of confessing sin as a normal part of the Christian walk and relying on God's grace and Christ's atoning sacrifice for forgiveness and cleansing. The alternation between statements denying sin and those admitting sin or commending holy living demonstrates God's hatred of sin in his people and his command for them to be holy.

#### **5. What is assurance of salvation, and what are the primary ways God provides it to his people?**

Assurance of salvation is the confident belief in one's final salvation. God graciously assures his people through three primary means: the promises of salvation in his Word, the internal witness of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual growth in their lives. The Bible's promises offer a stable foundation for assurance, while the Holy Spirit provides an inward conviction of God's love and sonship. Furthermore, as believers grow in godliness and obedience, they gain increasing confidence that God is at work in them and that their faith is genuine.

#### **6. How does Scripture, particularly Romans 5:1-5 and 10, illustrate the different ways God assures believers?**

Romans 5:1-5 and 10 is a key passage that combines the three means of assurance. The declaration of righteousness and reconciliation through Christ (verses 1 and 10) provides assurance through God's Word. The outpouring of God's love into believers' hearts through the Holy Spirit (verse 5) demonstrates assurance through the Spirit's inner witness. Additionally, the process of affliction leading to endurance, proven character, and hope (verses 3-4) shows how God's work in believers' lives, leading to spiritual growth, reinforces their assurance. Paul uses an argument from the greater to the lesser (God doing the harder thing of justification and reconciliation) to assure believers of the easier thing (being saved from wrath and by Christ's life).

**7. How does spiritual growth contribute to a believer's assurance of salvation according to the provided text?**

Spiritual growth, characterized by the pursuit of godly qualities (as described in 2 Peter 1:5-7) and obedience to God's commands (as highlighted in 1 John 2:3-6), serves as a means by which believers can have greater confidence in their calling and election. Peter states that those who diligently cultivate these virtues will be useful, fruitful, and will never stumble, ultimately having a rich entry into God's eternal kingdom (2 Peter 1:8-11). Similarly, John teaches that keeping God's commands is how we know we know him and that obedience strengthens the assurance of being in union with Christ. Observing God at work in their lives, changing them toward godliness, bolsters believers' confidence in his ongoing and future work.

**8. Is the Christian life a passive waiting for God's preservation, or does it require active participation from believers?**

The Christian life is not a passive waiting but requires active participation from believers. While God preserves his people, believers must actively persevere in faith, love, and holiness. They are called to "work out their own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). However, this activity is not independent of God; rather, it is God who "works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13). Believers grow by grace through faith, enabled by the Father, Son, and Spirit, to produce fruit and walk in a manner pleasing to God.